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AUTHOR Benz, Linda L.
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ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify organizations within the Chicago, Illinois, area having in-house secretarial training programs and to report the training requirements for nontechnical skills for secretarial personnel. The findings and conclusions of the study were based on an analysis of responses from 42 business organizations within the Chicago area. Some of the conclusions are as follows: (1) 17 of the 42 companies maintained an in-house training program for secretarial personnel; (2) those businesses which reportedly employed a greater number of secretaries supported an in-house secretarial training program; (3) the 10 most important nontechnical skills for a secretary were listed as confidentiality, telephone conversation, setting daily priorities, accuracy, dependability, one-on-one communication, punctuality, cooperativeness, organizational abilities, and listening skills; (4) companies that lacked provision for the development of a particular skill placed a higher degree of importance on that skill; (5) companies with in-house training programs tended to hire secretaries with more education; and (6) companies that provided in-house training also made provisions for outside training of personnel. Recommendations are made for further research and for dissemination of the results of this survey. (KC)

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NONTECHNICAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OF SECRETARIAL PERSONNEL IN SELECTED CHICAGO BUSINESSES

by

Linda L. Benz

B.S., Southern Illinois University 1979

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The office is the primary focus of information work, and with the shift from paperwork to electronic processes a change in job descriptions of support staff personnel has resulted in the contemporary business office. The first appearance of this shift from paperwork to electronics occurred in 1850 and was referred to as office mechanization. Today it is referred to as office automation.

Office mechanization entered the 20th century with the development of Morse's telegraph, Bell's telephone, Edison's dictating machine, the typewriter and then later with the development of electric typewriters, duplicating machines, copiers, adding machines, calculators, and offset printing presses. Typewriters were among the high technological items of the 1800's and early 1900's. Today, office computers and personal computers are considered to be the high technological items. Also, with the appearance of the computer, the term "office mechanization" has disappeared and has evolved into the term "office automation."

From the period of the mid-1800's to the present, the appearance of the above-mentioned equipment has affected the business office in numerous ways. In 1980, Ettinger stated that the office has been recently elevated from a rather static environment to one in which innovative systems and technology have altered the role of the

secretary. Giuliano (1982) itemizes a few of the many effects, such as the elimination of redundant work and unnecessary tasks, including retyping and manual filing and retrieval; better utilization of human resources and tasks that require judgment, initiative and rapid communication; and better decision making that takes into account many factors.

Statement of the Problem

Acquisition of new skills of the secretary, both technical and nontechnical, are required in this era of office automation. The development of technical skills that are required in the contemporary office have been identified as skills in word processing, electronic mail, records retention and retrieval, and telecommunications. The problem of identifying nontechnical training needs of secretarial personnel to meet changing office work requirements is prevalent today.

This study sought to identify organizations within the Chicago, Illinois, area having in-house training programs and to report the training requirements for nontechnical skills for secretarial personnel.

The following questions were answered through this study in relation to the resolution of the problem:

1. What organizations within the study population have an in-house training program designed for their secretarial personnel and what are the characteristics of these organizations?
2. What are the nontechnical skills required of secretarial personnel within the contemporary business office?
3. How does the organization address the need to develop nontechnical skills of secretaries within their in-house training and development programs?

Significance of the Study

In-house training programs can provide a smooth transition in these times of progressive change for employees, managers, and executives of an organization. The following citation by Wolff exemplifies the need to adapt to change by managers of the organization and especially those changes experienced by secretaries:

> Slowly, research and literature in office education has begun reflecting trends toward decision-making rather than the unquestioning following of directions: setting priorities and organizing one's work instead of handling one task at a time in the order assigned; teamwork rather than subservience. Recently, office education has included problem-solving and judgmental training. Employees who have received traditional office education need to upgrade their ability to adapt to changes in office work (1982, p. 84).

To date, few studies have been conducted which document the activities of in-house training programs, specifically those designed for secretarial personnel. This study will focus on training programs currently in operation and identify whether the organizations sampled feel that training in nontechnical skills is significant, what nontechnical skills are important for the secretaries to possess, and how the organization addresses the need for nontechnical skill development.

The results of this study might be used profitably by training directors as well as upper-level management to review the status of the office activities today and the new requirements of secretarial personnel within the office, and to develop a certain mind set toward changes in the business office and the requirements of possible changes in training procedures. The results might also be used by office educators in the public school and postsecondary institution as a means of supplying information on the status of new expectations within the

contemporary business office for secretaries and thus aid these individuals in training future secretaries to meet employment needs.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study included selected companies within the Chicago, Illinois, area (the city as well as suburbs). Those organizations were classified as either manufacturer, service, finance, insurance, real estate, retail, or other, such as distributor or publisher.

Definition of Terms

The following words are terms that are referred to in this study and require a definition to clarify their meaning for this study:

Training Director - the training director in the organization is a key individual in the enhancement of organizational and individual performance through the use of a training model.

In-House Training Programs - programs set up by individual businesses and industries to train their own personnel.

Retraining - a means by which employees are introduced to new equipment, processes, methods, techniques, and organization of work.

Contemporary Business Office - this term refers to the automated business office as it exists today.

Support Staff Personnel - a team of principals and secretaries who work together to carry out activities within an organization through well-developed procedures (Office Technology Management Associaton, 1982, p. 58).

Technical Skills - those skills which are related to a specific

technique. For example, those skills necessary for the performance of typewriting, dictation, transcription, and skills necessary for the operation of a calculator.

Nontechnical Skills - those skills not related to a specific technique. For example, decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, communications skills, and establishing priorities are nontechnical skills.

Secretary - one who provides support to the duties of the executive as well as performing general office tasks. Such tasks include taking and transcribing dictation, scheduling appointments, composing executive's routine correspondence, screening telephone calls and routing to appropriate official, and filing correspondence and other documents. A secretary may also oversee clerical workers and other secretaries (U.S. Department of Labor, 1977, p. 153).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to review recent literature published in the area of secretarial training requirements in the contemporary business office, specifically nontechnical competencies, and to review those activities in the office which require the development of these specific skills. Few studies were found which narrow down nontechnical training within business and industry to personnel classified as "secretarial"; therefore, the information is general in nature and encompasses the broad classification of office worker.

In general terms, the objectives or purposes of training differ whether the trainee is a secretary, a steel worker, a manager of people, or an assembly-line worker. Mills (1977) identified five general objectives of training, and they are as follows:

1. To motivate the trainee to want to learn
2. To impart the necessary knowledge of the employee's work including background, theory, and related subjects
3. To impart the practical skills and techniques of the work
4. To train men and women in attitudes of work, principles of team-work and human relations
5. To provide the means for making a clear assessment of the trainee's progress in and aptitude for a

> particular job so that a useful grading results. a proper selection of individuals for promotion can be made, and a plan for feedback is provided for both trainer and trainee (p. 13).

Objective four, to train men and women in attitudes of work, principles of team-work, and human relations, or nontechnical types of skills is what this study has thoroughly investigated, as well as how the changes in office technology have had an impact on these skills.

Crawford (1984) supported the development of in-house training programs for office personnel in her writings and emphasized the significance of organizations assuming some or all of the responsibility for training. In addition, she further commented that the key to an entire training program is that it is based upon the applications homogeneous to a particular organization. "Who better knows your applications than you?" remarked Crawford in support of the development of in-house training programs (p. 4).

The Evolution and Impact of Office Automation

Traditionally, an executive has been pictured as one who makes decisions about business problems and has been supported by a personal secretary. This boss/secretary relationship has been the basic organizational structure for offices throughout the country. A survey of secretaries and executives conducted by Professional Secretaries International revealed the generalization that office automation will force the secretary to learn new skills and thus, we have become aware that the traditional role of the secretary has changed as a result. Stallard, Smith and Reese (1983) recognized this change by pointing out that the executive/secretary team may disappear as the basic structure for completing office work and be replaced by a different type of office

setting. The development of new technical skills is obvious with the daily introduction of various types of electronic equipment, but the need for certain nontechnical skills is not quite so obvious. A close look at the evolution of office automation will illustrate these points.

Office mechanization first appeared in the 19th century and evolved into what we are familiar with today, office automation. The evolution of typewriters in the late 1800's had the same effect as what is now taking place with the evolution of office computers and small personal computers. The first half of the 20th century saw a refinement of existing office technologies, such as the development of the electric typewriter, and the introduction of new technologies. The new devices, including duplicating machines, copiers, calculators, and data-processing equipment operated with punched cards were accompanied by a rapid expansion in the volume of office communications and in the number of people involved in white-collar work.

Further refinement of office technologies in the late 1960's and the 1970's resulted in the usage of minicomputers, word processors and the microcomputer (Giuliano, 1982). In addition, Giuliano projected that by 1990 between 40% and 50% of all American workers will be making daily use of electronic-terminal equipment and 38 million terminal-based work stations will be in existence. He reported that the rapid increase of new technologies has resulted in a surprising increase in white-collar workers, whom he categorized as mostly office workers. From the period of 1900-1980, the composition of the white-collar group had increased from 7 million to approximately 51 million (Giuliano, 1982).

The impact of office automation is extensive and is reflected in the job responsibilities of the secretary. Fryar (1983) reported on a

recent poll sponsored by Kelly Services, Inc. and remarked about the change in the opportunities for a secretary:

> Once individuals establish themselves as support staff who support, advancement in the organization is feasible and career opportunities are much greater than they ever were in the 1960's and 70's (p. 13).

Furthermore, Fryar explained that from the employer's viewpoint, nearly half (48%) of those questioned see existing job categories being changed by the rapid increase of automated equipment, and a substantial majority of these individuals expect an upgrading of job categories. Dodd (1982) expressed a similar viewpoint about the impact of office automation. He remarked that the secretary's job was more difficult than most support staff because the secretary must manage in three distinct areas: she must manage activities for herself, the executives she works for, and her subordinates. Also, the personal qualities of tact, patience, initiative, loyalty and reliability must be added to a secretary's administrative functions. Stallard, et al. (1983) added that the secretarial function will be grouped into three basic groups: administrative support personnel, who will perform the scheduling, planning, and related decision-making support activities; corresponding support personnel, who will be responsible for the production of documents; and clerical support personnel, who will be responsible for the nonautomated routine activities. The traditional boss/secretary arrangement will eventually disappear.

From the employee's viewpoint, Tettenhorst (1983) presented her own view about how she perceives the role of the professional secretary in today's business world to a Secretary Speakout Conference. She stated:

> Secretaries are in a unique position to make positive contributions to their company in a variety of related areas. Your own skills in human relations can help

> the people in your company more readily accept the changes that new technology will bring. You can be instrumental in pinpointing those areas where you know from past experience that there will be resistance to change. Technology is going to change your role to that of an administrator. It will free you from the burdensome duties of routine typing assignments and give you the opportunity to use your creative talents and your managerial talents. Our communication skills, loyalty, discretion, resourcefulness, tact and especially ability to work harmoniously with others cannot be computerized (p. 24).

Thus, a secretary can be extremely influencial in easing the burden of technological change and accentuate the positive aspects rather than the negative aspects of change.

O. D. Resources (ODR), an Atlanta-based company, has been a leader in the area of managing change. Conner, leading psychologist of ODR, explained that with the advent of technological changes, an increase in people problems and repercussions in the work environment has appeared (Modern Office Technology, 1984). He further commented:

> New skills are required;
> Communication patterns are altered;
> Work relationships are altered;
> New management and organizational techniques are evolving; and
> People are generally reluctant to change their habits (p. 79).

The above symptoms generally surface during the introduction of new technology because important changes almost always require people to modify their attitudes and perceptions. These issues are seldom recognized and treated by management in an adequate manner, such as in the form of training. An assortment of techniques and mechanisms are required to deal most effectively with change through a partnership of hardware, software and people.

Thus far, we have been introduced to the concept that office automation evolution has resulted in the need to develop specific nontechnical skills. A 1982 Secretarial Help Wanted Advertisements

Survey conducted by The Secretary magazine and Professional Secretaries International Research and Educational Foundation revealed this important effect of office automation: As well as specifications for word processing and computer capabilities as mentioned in 11-18% of newspaper ads of 21 U.S. and Canadian cities, organizational abilities, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and administrative abilities were qualities also mentioned (The Word, 1983). In support, Lindsay (1981) reported on a doctoral study, conducted by Dr. Rita Kutie, which identified a hierarchy of job levels in secretarial work (not only between different job categories but also within each category) and this hierarchy was marked by increasing degrees of decision-making, communicating of judgments and decisions, and performance of unstructured work.

Golen and Titkemeyer (1982) emphasized the importance of departments of administration accepting the challenge of proficiency in human relations skills as well as a piece of office equipment. The Department of Business Communications and Office Systems at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge recognized the need for increased education in management and people-oriented skills and has developed a new curriculum called Office Systems - Office Operations. This system is preparing students to become administrative, office and information managers who can plan, organize, control, direct and communicate well in an office systems environment. Two specific courses, Business Report Writing and Human Behavior in Organizations, stress the development of such nontechnical skills as problem analysis, personnel recruitment and development, understanding interpersonal relationships of employees.

Johnson (1980) reported on Ettinger's study conducted in partial fulfillment of a Doctorate Degree in Education at New York University for the purpose of identifying competencies needed by secretarial and supervisory personnel. The data was collected from approximately 500 subjects in 73 firms in the New York Metropolitan Area. The results of her study support the necessity for nontechnical skill development. According to the mean scores, the following nontechnical skills were ranked high in significance: Working with others, setting priorities, managing time, communicating orally and in writing, cooperating with the staff, maintaining confidentiality, motivating personnel, and delegating responsibility.

Olivas (1979) reported on a survey conducted by the employee development administrator of the city of Phoenix to identify specific training needs of the city's employees. The employee development administrator interviewed management, supervisory and nonsupervisory personnel and the responses which occurred most frequently included the following training needs: interpersonal communication, decision-making, basic supervisory skills, team building, and human behavior skills. Finally, Olivas and Inman (1983) conducted a study in which a questionnaire was submitted to organizations in 31 states, Washington, D.C., the Bahamas, Canada and South Africa; and the objective of this study was to collect opinions from directors and managers of training and development about the status of corporate training and development. Approximately 90 individuals responded. These 90 individuals ranked in the order of importance what subjects they regarded as necessary for the 1980's and 1990's. In rank order, the following subjects were recommended: team building, communicating by interviewing, letter and

report writing; conflict management, interpersonal skills and human relations skills; and adjusting to change.

In further support of the necessity for training and development within the realm of nontechnical skills, a study was conducted in 1983 and sponsored by three major units on the Southern Illinois University campus, namely the Division of Continuing Education, Institutional Research and Studies, and Personnel Services. The purpose of this study was to assess the training and development needs of university staff in response to technological changes, particularly in communication and computers. The study population included the entire non-faculty population of the university (2684 employees); however, the writer was interested only in the civil service classifications or support staff of the university (1875 employees), including clerks, secretaries, transcribers and word processors, in this particular study. Seventy questions on the research instrument asked the participants to rank on a scale of 1 through 5, with 5 indicating a desire for training and 1 indicating no desire for training, what areas they would most desire training. The six training areas desired by civil service according to mean values is as follows and reflects a majority in the nontechnical skills area:

Ranking of Training Needs Items According to Mean Values

	Training Needs	Mean Values
1.	Computer Training	3.7
2.	Strategies and skills for handling problems	3.6
3.	Functional supervisory planning, organizing, directing, leading, and controlling responsibilities	3.6
4.	Increasing personal job satisfaction	3.6
5.	Understanding leadership styles	3.5
6.	Managing on-the-job conflict and anger	3.5

In addition, Wolvin (1980) supported the importance of communication training in relation to job performance in the organization. He conducted a study with the assistance of two individuals, Marsicovete and Schwartz, in the Washington, D.C., area and this study included a sampling population of corporations, government agencies, associations and private companies. A systematic random sample of individuals was taken from these four different populations, including presidents as well as secretaries, and a research instrument was mailed to these individuals. The purpose of the study was to identify communication skills needed by all types of persons in business organizations. The data compiled was analyzed according to frequency of response in each of four populations. The needs of the organization in the area of communication are identified as follows:

1. The problem of communication among coworkers was of universal importance. All four populations surveyed found this to be of great concern.

2. The understanding of given information was identified as a difficulty.

3. Training programs in public communication skills would be very beneficial.

4. Although this is not the highest priority, a training session on interviewing skills should be highly beneficial.

5. Misinterpretation of nonverbal cues leads to severe communication problems and should be dealt with in organizational training programs (Wolvin, 1980, p. 20).

Finally, Wolvin emphasized, with the support of data, that presidents as well as secretaries recognize communication skills in public speaking, group discussion, and interpersonal relationships as significant skills within an organization, and in-house communication training deserves a prominent role in programming and budgeting of an organization's training program.

In all of the studies described, the need to develop specific nontechnical competencies in the office worker has been repeated.

Methods of Developing Nontechnical Skills Within the Secretary

Review of the literature is limited in the area of specific methods and techniques utilized by training directors to develop certain nontechnical skills in secretarial personnel. However, Johnson (1980) reported that the director of Human Resources Research for American Telephone and Telegraph devised a test consisting of six broad areas and served as an instrument for training as well as testing. The qualities of problem-solving, judgment, leadership, decision-making, initiative and organizational planning are developed through the use of this test designed for training and testing. Johnson further stated that the need for the abilities of decision-making, analytical and personal skills has been recognized by the Institute for Certifying Secretaries, which included in-basket exercises to test these skills as part of its

certifying exam. Another method, role playing, has been used to require employees to assess situations and make decisions based upon their perceptions and in the process, groom for managerial talent.

In addition, an application of computer-assisted instruction to interpersonal skill training was announced by Development Dimensions International (DDI) of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This computer assistance method would be useful in teaching interpersonal skills of supervision, which many secretaries in the contemporary business office are required to practice in their jobs (Sorovitz, 1983). The president of DDI stated:

> When an organization can't invest training time to prepare supervisors in advance for these situations, CAI lets the skill be available at the teachable moment when the individual supervisor really needs it (p. 9).

The situations he referred to in his statement include absenteeism problems or interpersonal conflicts with an employee. This computer-assisted supervisory training system uses a microcomputer linked to an interactive videotape and is based on the assumption that the learner has already received basic interative skills training in the classroom. To gain skill in handling a particular interpersonal situation, the learner first watches a videotaped example (positive model) showing the problem being handled effectively. Then the learner is given the opportunity to interact with an employee on videotape. The computer branches to different parts of the videotape depending on the responses chosen by the learner. Finally, at the close of the simulation the learner is given specific feedback by the computer, based on the responses entered, in preparation for handling a real situation where interaction with an employee is involved.

Finally, many companies are concerned with employees' communication skills and rank effective communication among their greatest needs. Godell (1981) recommends the use of the group process technique to train secretaries for effective communication skills. The use of this technique allows group members to be active learners, to accept and develop ideas, to stimulate and energize its members of the group who need additional help, and finally, is a good confidence builder. He also emphasized the development of affective skills as being similar to developing any other skills--skills are learned through practice and proper guidance. This practice and proper guidance is available in many training programs.

Summary

A review of the related literature provides an understanding of the purpose of training and how new technologies within the contemporary business office have provided a need for training and retraining. As changes in the office have occurred, so have changes in the job descriptions of the traditional secretary. New technologies have freed up some of the secretary's time so that energy can be focused on new and challenging aspects of the job.

The literature review supported the following generalizations:

1. Office automation will force secretaries to learn new skills, including those of a nontechnical nature.

2. Once individuals establish themselves as support staff who support, advancement within the organization is feasible and new career opportunities will be opened up to secretarial personnel.

3. People skills are the training topics most needed currently and projected for the future; meeting the needs of employees is the principle factor in program selection.

4. In-house training will aid in the development of decision-making, judgmental, communication and other nontechnical skills through the use of various training methods.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH, METHOD, AND PROCEDURE

Study Population

The population for the study included all businesses within the Chicago, Illinois, area (the city as well as suburbs), including manufacturing, service, retail, finance, insurance or real estate companies and other miscellaneous types of organizations, such as distributors and publishers. From this group a systematic sample of 100 companies was selected from the 1984 Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives. This publication included a registry of 4000 corporations within the Chicago, Illinois, area and every fortieth corporation was selected comprising the total study population of 100 companies. A cross-section of companies was obtained from this sample and was categorized as manufacturing, service, retail, finance, insurance or real estate and other miscellaneous types of companies. Thirty companies were categorized as manufacturing businesses, 25 as public service, 20 as finance, insurance or real estate, 15 as retail, and 10 as other types of organizations. A questionnaire was mailed to the selected businesses to the attention of the individual who supervises training and development of their secretaries in order to determine if a formal training and development program existed for secretarial personnel. If a training program

existed, the training director was asked what nontechnical skills for secretaries are perceived as necessary in the changing office environment and how are their companies addressing this need or how do they plan to address this need in the future.

Instrument Design

Review of the literature provided information for the formulation of the mailed questionnaire. The instrument was designed to first determine which companies surveyed have in-house training programs and to present the characteristics of each company which responded, secondly, what nontechnical skills are regarded as significant; and thirdly, if the company addressed the need for nontechnical skill training, how is the company's training and development program addressing this requirement of secretarial personnel within the contemporary business office. Identification of essential nontechnical skills in a rank order of significance was produced after results of the questionnaire were analyzed.

On February 17, 1984, a letter was mailed to the study population to the attention of the personnel directors describing the study and requesting the organizations' participation in the study. A listing of personnel directors' names was secured from the Placement Office of the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, Illinois. A yes or no response was requested on an attached form as to the organization's desire to participate in the study as well as the name of their supervisor of training. On March 9, 1984, twenty (20) companies had responded affirmatively to participation. Twenty (20) responded negatively to the question of participation. This initial mailing

resulted in a forty (40) percent response rate. A copy of the transmittal letter as well as the form requesting participation or nonparticipation of each organization is included in Appendices A and B.

In order to determine the validity of the research instrument itself, the questionnaire was mailed to five or 5% of the population surveyed and was pilot tested in the St. Louis, Missouri, area. The names of the businesses were selected randomly from the 1984 Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives. This mailing was completed on March 19, 1984. A sixty (60) percent return rate was realized with no major problems in answering the questionnaire. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix C. Also, the final questionnaire was reviewed by the Carbondale Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects in order to comply with regulations governing human subjects research and it was approved for submission to the study population. A copy of this letter is included in Appendix D.

Investigational Procedures

The first mailing of the research instrument was completed on April 16, 1984, and was mailed to each company indicating a positive response to participation in the study. Twenty subjects out of the original 100 consented to participate in the study. In addition, those companies which did not return the form requesting participation were mailed a questionnaire. A total of 80 companies received the actual research instrument. A cover letter as well as a self-addressed envelope accompanied the questionnaire. An example of the transmittal letters are provided in Appendices E and F. The second mailing of the research instrument was sent on May 11, 1984. A follow-up letter including an

additional questionnaire and self-addressed envelope was mailed if response had not been made after three weeks.

Analysis of Data

The results of the research instrument are reported in narrative as well as tabular format and a percentage of total responses to each question are reported. A listing of nontechnical skills, in rank order, are reported according to the significance of each using median values and a percentage of responses are reported. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was chosen to analyze the data and to report the findings in an orderly and systematic fashion.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research Questions and Interpretations

Research Question One

A profile of the study population, which included participants from selected companies of Chicago, Illinois, and surrounding areas, can be described as those which indicated the existence of an in-house training program for secretarial personnel and those which presently do not maintain a program in house. Research question one requested the number of participating companies which maintained in-house training programs. Of the 42 companies which returned the questionnaire, 17 responded in the affirmative when asked whether their organization maintained an in-house training program designed specifically for secretarial personnel. Twenty-five did not maintain a training program in house. Appendix I includes a listing of those companies which participated.

Also, research question one requested demographic information or characteristics of the businesses which responded to the research instrument. Looking at the type of business organization which maintained a secretarial in-house training program within selected companies in Chicago, six (35%) were classified as finance, insurance or real estate, four (24%) classified themselves as manufacturers, three (17%) are in public service, four (24%) classified themselves as other, such as oil distributors and response marketing firms, with no retail

firms maintaining a training program in house at this time. In comparison, of those companies which participated and do not maintain formal in-house training of their secretaries, seven (28%) were classified as finance, insurance or real estate, four (16%) were classified as manufacturers, two (8%) as retail, ten (40%) as other, such as transporting businesses, telecommunicators, warehousing businesses, electronics, and publishers, and two (8%) as service organizations. Table 1 reports these findings in percentages as well as actual numbers.

TABLE 1

Classification of Respondents According to Type of Business Organization

	Companies Which Maintained In-House Training		Companies Which Did Not Maintain In-House Training	
Classification	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Finance, Insurance or Real Estate	6	35.0	7	28.0
Manufacturer	4	24.0	4	16.0
Retail	0	0.0	2	8.0
Service	3	17.0	2	8.0
Other	4	24.0	10	40.0
Total	17	100.0	25	100.0

The total number of secretarial personnel employed by the businesses which responded varies from 2 to 1,171. Those businesses which reportedly employed a greater number of secretaries support an in-house secretarial training program. The median value of secretarial personnel employed where an in-house training program existed was 168, and the median value for those which did not maintain an in-house program was 39. Furthermore, 58% of the business organizations which reported providing in-house training indicated their total number of secretarial personnel over 100. In comparison, 20% of the business organizations which reported providing no in-house training indicated their total number of secretaries over 100.

The selected companies were further asked if a pre-employment examination is administered to each applicant for a secretarial position with their respective company in order to determine what skills each possesses and if so, what subject areas are included in this pre-employment examination. First of all, 16 (94%) of those companies which conducted in-house training use pre-employment testing in comparison to 1 (6%) of those companies which did not give pre-employment examinations. Twenty (80%) respondents which did not maintain an in-house training program administer pre-employment exams in comparison to 5 (20%) who did not make use of any type of pre-employment test in application for a secretarial position.

Each respondent was requested to indicate the subject areas which are included on the pre-employment examination. Of those companies which indicated that an in-house program existed, 3 (18%) test business mathematics ability, 3 (18%) test filing techniques competencies, 4 (24%) test proofreading competencies, 10 (58%) test

spelling/grammar/punctuation, 8 (47%) test transcription abilities, 16 (94%) test typewriting capabilities, 2 (12%) test word processing concepts, and 2 (12%) test other areas, such as ability to insert data into a computer.

In comparison, those respondents which indicated that an in-house program does not exist but do administer pre-employment tests to applicants of secretarial positions showed a somewhat different spread of percentages according to subject matter areas included on their secretarial examinations. Four (16%) of those companies which did not maintain an in-house program test business mathematics, 3 (12%) test filing techniques, 3 (12%) test proofreading competencies, 9 (36%) test spelling/grammar/punctuation competencies, 7 (28%) test transcription capabilities, 20 (80%) test typewriting abilities, 2 (8%) test applicant's knowledge of word processing concepts, and 1 (4%) tests an additional area of concern, creative thinking concepts, which is included on their pre-employment examination. Frequency of responses is reported by percentages and actual numbers in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Frequency of Subject Areas Included On Pre-Employment Examinations

Subject Matter Area	Companies Which Maintained In-House Training		Companies Which Did Not Maintain In-House Training	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Business Mathematics	3	18.0	4	16.0
Filing Techniques	3	18.0	3	12.0
Proofreading	4	24.0	3	12.0
Spelling/Grammar/Punctuation	10	58.0	9	36.0
Transcription	8	47.0	7	28.0
Typewriting	16	94.0	20	80.0
Word Processing Concepts	2	12.0	2	8.0
Other	2	12.0	1	4.0

According to the data presented above, typewriting, spelling/grammar/punctuation, transcription, and proofreading are subject areas most frequently tested before employment with those companies which have indicated that an in-house training program existed. In comparison, typewriting, spelling/grammar/punctuation, transcription, and business mathematics are subject areas most frequently tested before employment with those companies which indicated that in-house training does not exist.

To further a profile of the business organizations which responded to the survey, the respondents were asked about the highest level of formal education of the majority of the secretaries they employed.

Of those companies which maintained an in-house training program for their secretaries, 8 (47%) indicated the highest level of formal education is a high school diploma or equivalency, 8 (47%) reported that the majority of their secretaries possess an associate, two-year or junior college degree and 1 (6%) reported that the majority possess bachelor's degrees. No respondents in this group reported that their secretaries have less than a high school diploma or master's degree. Of those respondents which did not maintain an in-house program, 20 (80%) responded that the majority of their secretaries secure high school diplomas or equivalency and 5 (20%) responded with associate, two-year, or junior college degrees. No respondents in this group reported that the majority of their secretarial personnel have less than a high school diploma, a bachelor's degree or master's degree. Therefore, the majority of the total respondents employed secretaries with at least high school diplomas, or equivalency, and a few employed secretaries with associate degrees and a few with bachelor's degrees.

Research Question Two

Research question two asked what nontechnical skills are required of secretarial personnel within the contemporary business office. Requested data were gathered by the use of a ranking of various nontechnical skills according to the degree of importance placed on each. Seventeen (40%) business organizations indicated on the survey that an in-house training program was maintained, and their training and development directors were requested to indicate the degree of importance each placed on a list of statements representing several nontechnical skills which a secretary could be required to possess in the contemporary business office. Twenty-five (60%) respondents were

not requested to respond to these statements because of their lack of in-house training programs at this time. The researcher was interested in the responses of those organizations which maintained a formal program in house and the importance as well as the degree of training provided in each of the nontechnical skills area.

Table 3 provides a representation of the frequency of responses, in percentages as well as actual numbers, for each statement. Absolutely important, very important, important, somewhat important and not important with values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively, were designated degrees of importance.

TABLE 3

Degree of Importance Placed On Thirty-five Nontechnical Skills
(n=17)

	Absolutely Important		Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Identify causes of stress in the work situation-- both physical and emotional	2	(11.8)	5	(29.4)	4	(23.5)	4	(23.5)	2	(11.8)
Offer solutions to problems	2	(11.8)	7	(41.2)	6	(35.3)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)
Take and defend a position	1	(5.9)	3	(17.6)	7	(41.2)	5	(29.4)	1	(5.9)
COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS										
Nonverbal communication										
Eye contact	2	(11.8)	12	(70.6)	3	(17.6)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Appearance	6	(35.3)	10	(58.8)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Handshake	1	(5.9)	1	(5.9)	5	(29.4)	7	(41.2)	3	(17.6)
Silence	1	(5.9)	2	(11.8)	4	(23.5)	8	(47.1)	2	(11.8)
Verbal communication										
One-on-one communication	14	(82.4)	2	(11.8)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)

TABLE 3-Continued

	Absolutely Important		Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Telephone conversation	16	(94.1)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Group interaction	6	(35.3)	6	(35.3)	4	(23.5)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)
Making introductions	5	(29.4)	4	(23.5)	5	(29.4)	3	(17.6)	0	(0.0)
Listening skills	11	(64.7)	5	(29.4)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Interviewing skills	2	(11.8)	2	(11.8)	7	(41.2)	2	(11.8)	4	(23.5)
Dictation Skills	3	(17.6)	7	(41.2)	3	(17.6)	2	(11.8)	2	(11.8)
Giving directions	1	(5.9)	7	(41.2)	6	(35.3)	2	(11.8)	1	(5.9)
HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS										
Develop positive self-concept	3	(17.6)	13	(76.5)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Accept criticism	6	(35.3)	9	(52.9)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Managing on-the-job conflict and anger	7	(41.2)	9	(52.9)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Recognizing and understanding change	5	(29.4)	10	(58.8)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)

TABLE 3-Continued

	Absolutely Important		Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Coping with prejudice and discrimination	4	(23.5)	6	(35.3)	4	(23.5)	2	(11.8)	1	(5.9)
Understanding motivation concepts	6	(35.3)	3	(17.6)	6	(35.3)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)
LEADERSHIP SKILLS										
Setting daily priorities	15	(88.2)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Planning and setting goals (both long and short range)	7	(41.2)	8	(47.1)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Effective delegation	3	(17.6)	3	(17.6)	6	(35.3)	3	(17.6)	2	(11.8)
Building employee morale and job satisfaction	5	(29.4)	2	(11.8)	6	(35.3)	2	(11.8)	2	(11.8)
Understanding need for productivity within the office	10	(58.8)	5	(29.4)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)

TABLE 3-Continued

PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	Absolutely Important		Very Important		Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Accuracy	15	(88.2)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Assertiveness	3	(17.6)	10	(58.8)	4	(23.5)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Cooperativeness	13	(76.5)	4	(23.5)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Dependability	15	(88.2)	2	(11.8)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Loyalty	8	(47.1)	6	(35.3)	3	(17.6)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Confidentiality	16	(94.1)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Punctuality	13	(76.5)	3	(17.6)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Initiative	9	(52.9)	7	(41.2)	1	(5.9)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
Organizational Ability	12	(70.6)	5	(29.4)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)

Table 4 depicts the median value computed for frequency of responses to the statements of nontechnical skills in a rank order. Confidentiality, telephone conversation, setting daily priorities, accuracy, dependability, punctuality, one-on-one communication, organizational abilities, listening skills, understanding a need for productivity in the office and initiative were identified, within a close margin, as skills absolutely important for a secretary in the contemporary business office to possess. According to the median values in Table 4, no nontechnical skill was identified as absolutely Not Important for a secretary to possess.

TABLE 4

Ranking of Nontechnical Skills According to Median Values

	Nontechnical Skills	Median Value
1.	Confidentiality	4.969
2.	Telephone conversation	4.969
3.	Setting daily priorities	4.933
4.	Accuracy	4.933
5.	Dependability	4.933
6.	One-on-one communication	4.893
7.	Punctuality	4.846
8.	Cooperativeness	4.846
9.	Organizational Ability	4.792
10.	Listening skills	4.727
11.	Understanding need for productivity within the office	4.650
12.	Initiative	4.556
13.	Loyalty	4.417
14.	Managing on-the-job conflict and anger	4.333
15.	Planning and setting goals (both long and short range)	4.313
16.	Appearance	4.250
17.	Accept criticism	4.222
18.	Recognizing and understanding change	4.150
19.	Group interaction	4.083
20.	Develop positive self-concept	4.077
21.	Eye contact	3.958
22.	Assertiveness	3.950

TABLE 4-Continued

	Nontechnical Skills	Median Value
23.	Coping with prejudice and discrimination	3.750
24.	Dictation skills	3.714
25.	Understanding motivation concepts	3.667
26.	Making introductions	3.625
27.	Offer solutions to problems	3.571
28.	Giving direction	3.417
29.	Building employee morale and job satisfaction	3.250
30.	Identify causes of stress in the work situation--both physical and emotional	3.125
31.	Effective delegation	3.083
32.	Take and defend a position	2.857
33.	Interviewing skills	2.857
34.	Handshake	2.286
35.	Silence	2.250

4.56-5.00 = Absolutely Important
3.56-4.55 = Very Important
2.56-3.55 = Important
1.56-2.55 = Somewhat Important
0.00-1.55 = Not Important

Research Question Three

Research question three sought to answer how the organizations which maintained in-house training programs address the need for development of nontechnical skills. A series of questions on the research instrument identified how this question is addressed in each organization.

An in-house training program is conducted either on an individual basis, group basis within a classroom setting, or both individual and group basis. According to those respondents which maintained an in-house program, 4 (23.5%) train only on an individual basis, 2 (11.8%) train only on a group basis, and 11 (64.7%) conduct training using both individual and group instruction.

The researcher was also concerned with the number of hours, within a 40-hour work week, devoted to training or how many hours are consumed during a regular 40-hour work week away from the actual job site for the purpose of training. Thirteen (76.5%) companies indicated that 1 to 5 hours is consumed each week for training away from the actual job site, 1 (5.9%) company indicated 5 to 10 hours per week, 1 (11.8%) indicated 10 hours or more per week and 1 (5.9%) indicated no response to this question.

Furthermore, many of the business organizations surveyed augment in-house training courses with one or all of the following out-of-house activities--local community college or four-year university courses, adult non-credit courses, or workshops or seminars. Nine (52.9%) companies also augment their in-house training with community college or four-year university courses. Three (1.6%) companies send their secretaries to adult non-credit classes and seven (41.2%) augment their

training program with workshops or seminars. In comparison, six (35.3%) of the total seventeen business organizations which maintained in-house training do not use any of the above out-of-house activities to augment their present training program.

Most importantly, the seventeen companies which maintained in-house training programs were asked whether the development of nontechnical skills is incorporated into their training program. Eleven (64.7%) companies indicated that they do attempt to develop nontechnical skills through training in house and in comparison, six (35.3%) responded with a response of "No."

Furthermore, Table 5 is a representation of the relationship of the degree of importance placed on the 35 nontechnical skills and the existence or nonexistence of the development of these skills in those companies which maintained training programs. This representation is based on median values. The presentation of the data reveals a higher degree of importance placed on the list of nontechnical skills of those companies which indicated that the development within their training courses for these or similar skills does not exist as compared to the degree of importance indicated by those companies which do presently incorporate the development of nontechnical skills into their training courses.

TABLE 5

Relationship of Degree of Importance Placed on Thirty-five Nontechnical Skills and the Presence of Nontechnical Skill Training In House (n=17)

Nontechnical Skills	Yes[1]	No[2]
Identify causes of stress in the work situation--both physical and emotional	3.000	3.500
Offer Solutions to problems	3.625	3.500
Take and defend a position	2.600	3.500
Eye contact	3.857	4.100
Appearance	4.143	4.500
Handshake	2.083	3.000
Silence	2.286	2.000
One-on-one communication	4.813	5.000
Telephone conversation	4.950	5.000
Group interaction	4.000	4.167
Making introductions	3.000	4.750
Listening skills	4.583	4.900
Interviewing skills	2.625	3.167
Dictation skills	3.800	3.500
Giving directions	3.200	3.833
Develop positive self-concept	3.950	4.500
Accept criticism	3.083	4.500
Managing on-the-job conflict and anger	4.250	4.500
Recognizing and understanding change	4.000	4.500
Coping with prejudice and discrimination	3.125	4.500
Understanding motivation concepts	3.200	4.750

TABLE 5-Continued

Nontechnical Skills	Yes[1]	No[2]
Setting daily priorities	4.950	4.900
Planning and setting goals	4.375	4.250
Effective delegation	2.875	3.500
Building employee morale and job job satisfaction	3.000	4.000
Understanding need for productivity within the office	4.714	4.500
Accuracy	4.950	4.900
Assertiveness	3.917	4.000
Cooperativeness	4.813	4.900
Dependability	4.889	5.000
Loyalty	4.000	4.900
Confidentiality	4.950	5.000
Punctuality	4.813	4.900
Initiative	4.400	4.750
Organizational Ability	4.714	4.900

[1] Companies which indicated "Yes" in regards to incorporation of the development of nontechnical skills within their in-house training courses

[2] Companies which indicated "No" in regards to incorporation of the development of nontechnical skills within their in-house training courses

4.56-5.00 = Absolutetly Important
3.56-4.55 = Very Important
2.56-3.55 = Important
1.56-2.55 = Somewhat Important
0.00-1.55 = Not Important

Tests of significance with the use of chi-squares were calculated for the independent variable of the incorporation of nontechnical skill development within in-house training program courses to each of the dependent variables, degree of importance placed on the thirty-five nontechnical skills. Only two variables were found to be statistically significant. The nontechnical skills of making introductions and developing a positive self-concept were found to be statistically significant at the .05 level with measurements of significance at 0.0278 and 0.0318 respectively. The independent variable, the incorporation of nontechnical skill development within in-house training program courses, was found to have no significant relationship with the remainder of the dependent variables, the degree of importance placed on each nontechnical skill.

In addition, the following lists the titles of topics or courses which incorporate the development of these nontechnical skills in the 11 (64.7%) companies which attempted to develop these skills:

Building communication skills (assertiveness training)
Individual development seminar (career development training)
Professional telephone skills
Poise and presence
Customer service skills
Time management
Effective listening
Team building
Voice and courtesy workshops
Non-verbal communication
Stress management
Managing the flow of work
Career strategies
Problem solving
Interviewing workshops

Various types of training techniques are used by trainers to aid in the development of technical and nontechnical skills. Some techniques are used more frequently than others. Table 6 represents the frequency

in actual numbers and percents of the use of several training techniques to aid in the development of nontechnical skills.

TABLE 6

Frequency of Use of Training Techniques in Selected Chicago, Illinois, Companies
(n=11)

Technique	No.	Pct.
Computer-Assisted Instruction	3	17.6
Case Study	6	35.3
Group Discussion	11	64.7
Lecture	9	52.9
Media (video tape, films, television)	11	64.7
Programmed Instruction	2	11.8
Role Playing	9	52.9
Simulation	3	17.6
Other	0	0.0

Six (35.3%) companies which indicated that they did not incorporate nontechnical skill training into their in-house training programs were asked if they perceive a need to incorporate nontechnical skill development into their training courses. Three (17.6%) companies responded that they do perceive a need to incorporate nontechnical skill development and three (17.6%) responded negatively to the perception of this need.

Finally, those companies which maintained in-house training were asked who is responsible for the decision in regards to which subjects

will be covered in the content of their respective training programs. Fourteen (82.4%) of the seventeen companies which maintained training in house indicated that management makes the decision about what subjects will be included in the content of their training programs, 10 (58.8%) indicated the Personnel Department, 9 (52.9%) indicated that the employees are given the opportunity to aid in this decision-making process, 6 (35.3%) indicated the union of management, personnel department, and employees (trainees) to make a decision, and 4 (23.5%) indicated that the training department or trainer is responsible for a decision concerning subject matter in training courses.

Additional Information

The respondents of the study were given an opportunity on the final page of the questionnaire to make additional comments in regards to information pertinent to nontechnical skill training. No additional comments were indicated on the questionnaire.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Restatement of the Problem

Acquisition of new skills of the secretary, both technical and nontechnical, are required in this era of office automation. The development of technical skills that are required in the contemporary office have been identified as skills in word processing, electronic mail, records retention and retrieval, and telecommunications. The problem of identifying nontechnical training needs of secretarial personnel to meet changing office work requirements is prevalent today.

This study sought to identify organizations within the Chicago, Illinois, area having in-house training programs and to report the training requirements for nontechnical skills for secretarial personnel.

The following questions were answered through this study in relation to the resolution of the problem:

1. What organizations within the study population maintain an in-house training program designed for their secretarial personnel and what are the characteristics of these organizations?

2. What are the nontechnical skills required of secretarial personnel within the contemporary business office?

3. How does the organization address the need to develop nontechnical skills of secretaries within their in-house training and development programs?

Findings and Conclusions

The findings and conclusions were based on an analysis of the responses from 42 business organizations within the Chicago, Illinois, area (the city and suburbs). The results of this study may be valuable to training directors as well as upper-level management and office educators of public schools and postsecondary institutions.

Selected Chicago, Illinois, business organizations revealed the following information:

1. Of the total 42 companies which participated in the study, 17 maintained an in-house training program designed specifically for secretarial personnel.

2. Those businesses which reportedly employed a greater number of secretaries support an in-house secretarial training program (Median value of those companies maintaining a training program equals 168 and those companies which do not maintain a training program equals 39).

3. There is no significant relationship between the use of any type of pre-employment examination and the maintenance of a training program.

4. There is very little difference between the frequency of subject areas included on pre-employment examinations of those respondents which maintain in-house training and those which do not maintain training programs in house.

The following findings relate only to those companies which maintain in-house training programs:

5. Of the total frequency of responses to the listing of thirty-five nontechnical skills on the survey instrument and the median values of each, confidentiality, telephone conversation, setting daily

priorities, accuracy, dependability, one-on-one communication, punctuality, cooperativeness, organizational abilities, and listening skills were the ten most important nontechnical skills that a secretary should be required to possess.

6. Making introductions, offering solutions to problems, giving direction, building employee morale and job satisfaction, identifying causes of stress in the work situation, effective delegation, taking and defending a position, interviewing skills, handshake and silence were ranked as the ten least important nontechnical skills according to median values.

7. The majority of respondents conduct training using both individual and group instruction.

8. No significant differences exist in relation to the presence of nontechnical skill development and the degree of importance placed on the selected group of nontechnical skills.

9. The majority of respondents incorporate the development of nontechnical skills into their in-house training programs.

10. The use of group discussion, media (video tape, films, television), lecture and role playing are the techniques most frequently used to aid in the development of nontechnical skills.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are considered important and valid as a result of the data analysis:

1. The traditional nontechnical skills that have been required of secretaries in the past, such as confidentiality, accuracy, dependability, punctuality, listening skills and loyalty, were ranked

higher according to a median value than those nontechnical skills, which related literature has identified as new skills a secretary will need to possess in addition to the traditional skills, such as offering solutions to problems, identifying causes of stress in the work situation, effective delegation, giving direction and interviewing skills. Based on the data, the traditional nontechnical skills required of a secretary are still considered to be absolutely important in the contemporary business office.

2. Companies that lack provision for the development of a particular skill or skills place a higher degree of importance on that skill or skills.

3. Companies which maintained an in-house training program tend to hire secretaries with more education.

4. The majority of the respondents indicated that employees influence the decision concerning the subject matter content of training programs.

5. The respondents which provided in-house training also provide an opportunity for their employees to obtain training outside the organization. Out-of-house activities as well as in-house activities are essential in order to meet an important objective of training in general, namely, to impart the necessary knowledge of the employee's work and to train in attitudes of work.

Implications for Further Research

Based on the research completed in this study and the findings reported, the following recommendations have been made:

1. It is suggested that the study be repeated for means of comparison. The differences would lie with the use of a different study population, such as a selected sample of Fortune 500 companies, and the ranking of the nontechnical skills by those business organizations which do not maintain in-house training programs as well as those which do maintain in-house training for purposes of comparison.

2. It is suggested that this study be repeated in 1990 to determine if the nontechnical training requirements for the secretary have changed within a five-year time span or the degree of importance placed on each skill listed in the study has shifted somewhat.

3. It is recommended that a summary of the data and the findings be submitted to the participants of the study which maintain an in-house training program and especially to those companies which do not incorporate nontechnical skill training into their programs but do perceive a need to do so.

4. It is recommended that a summary of the analysis of the data and the findings be submitted to those participants of the study which indicated that they do not maintain an in-house program currently.

5. It is suggested that further research be conducted to identify both technical and nontechnical skill training requirements of the secretary in the office and determine the balance between the two skill areas that the secretary will need to possess as referred to by current, related literature.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER WHICH ACCOMPANIED FORM
REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

Institutional Research & Studies
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois 62901
February 17, 1984

Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Attention:

Dear :

May I enlist your help. In cooperation with the Business Education Program at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, I am conducting a study of in-house training programs offered by business and industry within Chicago and surrounding suburbs for their secretarial personnel.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and report the training requirements of secretarial personnel within the contemporary business office in the arena of nontechnical skills and to determine how the organization is addressing the need to develop specific nontechnical skills. Nontechnical skills are defined as those skills which do not employ those words, expressions, or meanings largely confined to a particular occupation--those skills not related to a specific technique.

Would your organization be willing to participate in this study? Please indicate your response on the attached form and return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by Monday, March 5, 1984.

Your assistance with my request will aid me in compiling valuable data concerning secretarial training within business and industry with a special emphasis on nontechnical skill training. If you participate, you will receive a copy of my findings.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Benz
Graduate Student
Master's Program
Business Education Department

Enclosures
Questionnaire
Self-Addressed Envelope

APPENDIX B

FORM WHICH REQUESTED PARTICIPATION IN STUDY

ID #_____

NONTECHNICAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS SURVEY

February, 1984

Would your organization be willing to participate in the study described to you in the attached letter? (Please indicate with a Yes or No response below)

_____ Yes

_____ No

If your response is Yes, please indicate the name of the individual within your organization who supervises training of your secretarial personnel so that a questionnaire will be sent to that individual at a later date.

Name_____

Title_____

Address_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER WHICH ACCOMPANIED FIELD TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Institutional Research and Studies
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois 62901
March 16, 1984

Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Attention:

Dear :

May I enlist your help. In cooperation with the Business Education Program at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, I am conducting a study of in-house training programs offered by business and industry for their secretarial personnel. I would like to request your company to participate in the field testing of the questionnaire.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and report the training requirements of secretarial personnel within the contemporary business office in the arena of nontechnical skills and to determine how the organization is addressing the need to develop specific nontechnical skills. Nontechnical skills are defined as those skills which do not employ those words, expressions, or meanings largely confined to a particular occupation--those skills not related to a specific technique.

Would you please take a few moments of your time to answer the attached questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope by APRIL 6, 1984. The questionnaire contains three parts: 1) demographic information, 2) degree of importance of various nontechnical skills, and 3) questions regarding training and development programs. If you have any problems with the questionnaire or are uncertain about the responses requested, please indicate in the left-hand margin any comments. Your assistance with my request will aid me in eliminating problems with the wording of the questionnaire and thus produce more valuable and reliable results. If you will participate, you will receive a copy of my findings. Please indicate your interest on the bottom of Page 5 of the questionnaire.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Benz
Master's Student
Business Education Program
Vocational Education Studies

Enclosures
Questionnaire
Self-Addressed Envelope

APPENDIX D

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
APPROVAL LETTER

Southern Illinois
University at Carbondale
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

Carbondale Committee for Research
Involving Human Subjects

12 April 1984

Ms. Linda Benz
Institutional Research & Studies
C A M P U S

Dear Ms. Benz:

As you may know, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR 46) governing human subjects research were substantially revised on January 26, 1981. The revised regulations went into effect on July 27, 1981. The new regulations exempt from Committee review certain types of research which pose little or no threat to the subjects participating in the study. A preliminary examination of your research protocol shows that your proposed study falls into this category and does not, therefore, require review by the CCRIHS. Should you make any modifications to the protocol, however, you should notify the Committee of those changes.

We appreciate your sensitivity to the rights of the subject population and have included for your further information some general principles and concerns which should be addressed in every research proposal involving human subjects.

Thank you for your effort and best wishes for the success of your research.

Sincerely,

Dennis L. Molfese, Ph.D.
Chairman

APPENDIX E

COVER LETTER MAILED WITH QUESTIONNAIRE TO THOSE
WHICH INDICATED A "YES" RESPONSE TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

Institutional Research and Studies
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
April 16, 1984

Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Attn:

Dear :

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my study described to you in my letter dated February 17, 1984.

Enclosed is the Nontechnical Training Requirements Survey. The survey contains three parts: 1) demographic information, 2) degree of importance of various nontechnical skills, and 3) questions regarding training and development programs. Would you please take a few moments of your time to answer the questionnaire enclosed and return it in the self-addressed envelope by MAY 4, 1984.

Results of this study will be used by training directors as well as upper level management to review secretarial training activities in relation to changing office activities. A copy of the results of the study is available to you. Please indicate your interest on the bottom of Page 5 of the questionnaire.

If you have any questions about completing the questionnaire, I can be reached at (618) 536-2384. I greatly appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Benz
Master's Student
Business Education Program
Vocational Education Studies

Enclosures
Questionnaire
Self-Addressed Envelope

APPENDIX F

COVER LETTER MAILED WITH QUESTIONNAIRE TO THOSE
WHICH DID NOT RESPOND TO LETTER OF REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

Institutional Research and Studies
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois 62901
April 16, 1984

Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Attn:

Dear :

May I enlist your help. In cooperation with the Business Education Program at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, I am conducting a study of in-house training programs offered by business and industry for their secretarial personnel within Chicago, Illinois and surrounding suburbs.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the training requirements of secretarial personnel within the contemporary business office in the arena of nontechnical skills and to report how the organization is addressing the need to develop specific nontechnical skills. Nontechnical skills are defined as those skills which do not employ those words, expressions, or meanings largely confined to a particular occupation--those skills not related to a specific technique.

Would you please take a few moments of your time to answer the attached questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope by MAY 18, 1984. The questionnaire contains three parts: 1) demographic information, 2) degree of importance of various nontechnical skills, and 3) questions regarding training and development programs.

Results of this study will be used by training directors as well as upper level management to review secretarial training activities in relation to changing office activities. A copy of the results of the study is available to you. Please indicate your interest on the bottom of Page 5 of the questionnaire.

If you have any questions about completing the instrument, I can be reached at (618) 536-2384. I greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Benz
Master's Student
Business Education Program
Vocational Education Studies

Enclosures
Questionnaire
Self-Addressed Envelope

APPENDIX G

QUESTIONNAIRE

ID #_____

NONTECHNICAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS SURVEY

April, 1984

PART I. Demographic Information

DIRECTIONS: Please circle one code number for each question and answer all questions which apply to your organization.

1. How would you classify your business organization?

Finance, Insurance, or Real Estate	1
Manufacturer	2
Retail	3
Service	4
Other (Specify)_____	

2. Total number of personnel employed by your business who are classified as "secretarial".[1]

_____

3. Is a pre-employment exam given to each applicant for a secretarial position in order to determine what skills each possesses?

Yes	1
No	2

If your answer is NO to Question 3, GO TO Question 5.

4. If your answer is YES to Question 3, indicate which subject areas are included in the pre-employment exam. *(Circle all that apply)*

Business Mathematics	1
Filing Techniques	2
Proofreading	3
Spelling/Grammar/Punctuation	4
Transcription	5
Typewriting	6
Word Processing Concepts	7
Other (Specify)_____	

_____

_____

5. What is the highest level of formal education of the majority of the employees classified as secretarial personnel?

Less than high school diploma.	1
High school diploma (or equivalency)	2
Associate, two-year, junior college degree. . .	3
Bachelor's degree.	4
Master's degree.	5

6. Does your organization provide in-house training for your secretarial personnel?

Yes	1
No	2

If your answer is YES to Question 6, please continue on.

If your answer is NO to Question 6, please return the questionnaire without going on.

[1] A secretary is defined as one who provides support to the duties of the executive as well as performing general office tasks. Such tasks include taking and transcribing dictation, scheduling appointments, composing executive's routine correspondence, screening telephone calls and routing to appropriate official, and filing correspondence and other documents. A secretary may also oversee clerical workers and other secretaries.

PART II: Nontechnical Skills

DIRECTIONS: *The statements below represent several nontechnical skills which a secretary could be required to possess in the contemporary business office. Indicate for each statement the degree of importance you place on each of these skills. (Circle one answer code number for each method.)*
The numbers mean:

5 = Absolutely Important
4 = Very Important
3 = Important
2 = Somewhat Important
1 = Not Important

	Absolutely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
7. PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS					
a. Identify causes of stress in the work situation--both physical and emotional . . .	5	4	3	2	1
b. Offer solutions to problems	5	4	3	2	1
c. Take and defend a position	5	4	3	2	1
8. COMMUNICATION SKILLS					
Nonverbal communication:					
a. Eye contact	5	4	3	2	1
b. Appearance	5	4	3	2	1
c. Handshake	5	4	3	2	1
d. Silence	5	4	3	2	1
Verbal communication:					
e. One-on-one communication	5	4	3	2	1
f. Telephone conversation	5	4	3	2	1
g. Group interaction	5	4	3	2	1
h. Making introductions	5	4	3	2	1
i. Listening skills	5	4	3	2	1
j. Interviewing skills	5	4	3	2	1
k. Dictation skills	5	4	3	2	1
l. Giving directions	5	4	3	2	1

		Absolutely Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
9.	HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS					
	a. Develop positive self-concept	5	4	3	2	1
	b. Accept criticism	5	4	3	2	1
	c. Managing on-the-job conflict and anger	5	4	3	2	1
	d. Recognizing and understanding change	5	4	3	2	1
	e. Coping with prejudice and discrimination	5	4	3	2	1
	f. Understanding motivation concepts	5	4	3	2	1
10.	LEADERSHIP SKILLS					
	a. Setting daily priorities	5	4	3	2	1
	b. Planning and setting goals (both long and short range)	5	4	3	2	1
	c. Effective delegation	5	4	3	2	1
	d. Building employee morale and job satisfaction	5	4	3	2	1
	e. Understanding need for productivity within the office	5	4	3	2	1
11.	PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS					
	a. Accuracy	5	4	3	2	1
	b. Assertiveness	5	4	3	2	1
	c. Cooperativeness	5	4	3	2	1
	d. Dependability	5	4	3	2	1
	e. Loyalty	5	4	3	2	1
	f. Confidentiality	5	4	3	2	1
	g. Punctuality	5	4	3	2	1
	h. Initiative	5	4	3	2	1
	i. Organizational Ability	5	4	3	2	1

PART III. Training and Development

DIRECTIONS: *Please circle one code number for each question and answer all questions which apply to your organization.*

12. How is your in-house training program conducted within the organization?

Individual basis	1
Group basis	2
Both Individual and Group basis	3

13. In response to your answer to Question 12, how many hours are devoted to training within a 40-hour work week?

1-5 hours	1
5-10 hours	2
10 hours or more	3

14. Does your organization augment in-house training courses with one or all of the following out-of-house activities? *(Circle all that apply)*

Local Community College or Four-Year University Courses	1
Adult Non-credit Courses	2
Workshops or Seminars	3
Do not use the above out-of-house activities to augment training in house	4

15. Does your training program incorporate the development of nontechnical skills within its courses, such as those described in Part II?

Yes	1
No	2

If your answer is NO to Question 15, GO TO Question 18

16. If your answer is YES to Question 15, list the title of four (4) topics/courses which incorporate the development of nontechnical skills, such as those described in Part II.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

17. Indicate the types of training techniques used to aid in the development of nontechnical skills within your training program. *(Circle all that apply)*

Computer-Assisted Instruction	1	Programmed Instruction	6
Case Study	2	Role Playing	7
Group Discussion	3	Simulation	8
Lecture	4	Other (Specify)_____	
Media, such as video tape, films, television	5	_____	
		_____	

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18. If your answer is NO to Question 15, do you perceive a need to incorporate the development of nontechnical skills within your training program?

Yes . . . 1
No . . . 2

19. Who makes the decision about which subjects will be covered in the content of your training program? *(Circle all that apply)*

Management 1
Personnel Department. 2
Employees 3
Other (Specify)_____

PART IV. Additional Information

20. Please feel free to indicate additional information pertinent to nontechnical skill training and development, including additional skills which were not included in Part II.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you would like a copy of the results of this study, please indicate below with a "Yes" or "No" response.

Yes . . . 1
No. . . . 2

MAIL RESULTS TO: Name_____

Title_____

Company_____

Address_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE BY _____.

APPENDIX H

SECOND FOLLOW UP LETTER

Institutional Research and Studies
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
May 11, 1984

Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Attn:

Dear :

I need your help! Four weeks ago you received a questionnaire from me concerning a study of in-house training programs offered by business and industry for their secretarial personnel. This is a reminder to ask you to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.

If you have already given me your response, thank you. If not, your reply is vital to report the status of in-house training today and the need to address the development of nontechnical skills, such as, interpersonal and leadership skills, in secretarial personnel.

Please return the enclosed questionnaire by JUNE 1, 1984 if you have not done so to this date. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. I look forward to reading your comments.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Benz

Enclosures
Questionnaire
Self-Addressed Envelope

APPENDIX I

CHICAGO BUSINESSES WHICH PARTICIPATED IN STUDY

PARTICIPANTS OF STUDY

A. G. Becker
A. M. Castle and Co.
Allstate Insurance Co.
American Arbitration Assoc.
American National Bank and Trust
Amersham Corp.
Amoco Oil Company
Armak Co.
Arthur Andersen & Co.
Bank of Commerce and Industry
Bankers Life and Casualty
Borg-Warner Corp.
Cassidy, Schade & Gloor
Central Telephone Company
Chicorp Inc.
Continental Bank
Continental Insurance Co.
Deltak
The First National Bank of Chicago
Honeywell
Illinois Bell
Inland Steel Company
J.C. Penney Company, Inc.
Kemper Financial Services
Milwaukee Road
Motorola Inc.
National Acceptance Co.
Needham, Harper and Steers
Pepsi-Cola General Bottlers
Quaker Oats
Robert Bosch Corp.
Signature
Standard Oil Co. (Indiana)
Stenograph
Talman Home Federal Savings and Loan
Tel-Pro, Inc.
Teradyne Central Inc.
Tyndale Publishing Company
Unibane Trust
United Airlines
Walgreen Company
Western Electric

VITA

Name: Linda L. Benz Date of Birth: September 9, 1957

Home Address: R.R. #4
Carbondale, IL 62901

Local Address: 1433 E. Walnut, Apt. 9C
Carbondale, IL 62901

Education: 1977-1979 Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, B.S. Business Education (Noncertification)

1977-1975 Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, A.A. Secretarial Sciences

Special Honors: Young Career Woman, 1982
Outstanding Young Woman of America, 1982
Outstanding Young Woman of America, 1983
Who's Who in the Midwest, 1983

Research Report Title: Nontechnical Training Requirements of Secretarial Personnel in Selected Chicago Businesses

Major Professor: Dr. Marcia Anderson Yates